

***C. ariakensis* (Asian oyster)**

Talking Points

- No one fully understands what will happen if the Asian oyster is introduced into the Chesapeake Bay.
- To better understand the potential effects, NOAA *strongly* supports extensive study of the implications of introducing a non-native oyster into the Bay.
- Last year, NOAA began a non-native oyster research initiative funded at approximately \$2 million.
- Another \$2 million will be awarded this year. The review process is underway, and awards will be announced in August or September.
- FY05 priorities include continuing the multiyear biological projects currently underway, as well as addressing economic information needs so the environmental impact statement (EIS) can adequately evaluate the costs and economic benefits of the proposed action and each of the alternatives

Background

- The states of Maryland and Virginia support the introduction of *C. ariakensis* (Asian oyster) into the Chesapeake Bay.
- The states believe an Asian oyster will revitalize the waning oyster industry and lead to a cleaner, healthier Bay.
- The introduction of a non-native species is a very serious environmental and public policy decision, worthy of significant study. It could have potentially dangerous and irreversible impacts on Chesapeake Bay and adjacent waters.
- NOAA believes top research priorities relating to the Asian oyster should be fulfilled as quickly as possible so that a thorough, scientifically defensible EIS can be produced in a reasonable timeframe.
- We are fortunate to have the best scientific guidance possible from the National Research Council (NRC) and Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee of the Chesapeake Bay Program (STAC).
- The National Research Council and STAC concluded that a *minimum of 5 years of biological research* will be necessary to fully evaluate both the risks and potential ecological benefits of introducing *C. ariakensis* into the Bay.
- Funding for Asian oyster research funded by NCBO was guided by priorities set by the NRC and the STAC.
- Projects also underwent a rigorous competitive process involving independent technical reviews of each proposal and a final ranking panel.